

# THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF BOSTON



BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT  
ROBERT R. SPILLANE

*Sum / a 5*

AUG 23 1983

August 19, 1983

## M E M O R A N D U M

TO: President and Members, Boston School Committee

FROM: Robert R. Spillane, Superintendent *Robert R. Spillane*

SUBJECT: Student Assignments at the Burke and Dorchester High Schools

Attached for your review and consideration please find an update on the Burke and Dorchester High Schools. In this report John Coakley gives a comprehensive analysis of the enrollment history of the two schools as well as an update of the enrollment and assignment process for 1983-1984 and some suggestions about what more can be done.

Mr. Coakley will be available at the School Committee meeting on August 23, 1983 to respond on any questions in this regard.

RRS:ls  
Attachment



# THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF BOSTON



SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
BOSTON

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BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
DEPARTMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION  
John R. Coakley, Senior Officer

August 18, 1983

## MEMORANDUM

To: Robert R. Spillane  
From: John R. Coakley *John R. Coakley*  
Subject: Student Assignments at Burke High School and  
Dorchester High School

You have asked me to comment on the Student Assignments at the Burke High School and Dorchester High School.

### 1. Enrollment Decline and the High Schools

From December 1977 to December 1982 our total system enrollment declined by 14,000. However, note the grade levels at which the decline occurred.

	<u>K-5</u>	<u>6-8</u>	<u>9-12</u>	<u>Postgrad.</u>	<u>Total</u>
12/77	33472	17119	19496	1157	71244
12/82	25004	13654	18171	423	57252
Change	- 8468	- 3465	- 1325	- 734	-13992
Percent change	- 25%	- 20%	- 7%	- 63%	- 20%

High schools only now are beginning to feel the brunt of the decline in births. (A typical high school senior was born in 1966 when there were 12,766 births in Boston; a typical first-grader was born in 1977 when there were 6,966 births in Boston.) Observe the prospective enrollment changes in the next five school years.

	<u>K-5</u>	<u>6-8</u>	<u>9-12</u>	<u>Postgrad.</u>	<u>Total</u>
12/82 Actual	25004	13654	18171	423	57252
12/83 Projected	24310	13160	17475	450	55395
12/87 Projected	25485	11665	14705	450	52305
Change ('82-'87)	+ 481	- 1989	- 3466	+ 27	- 4947
Percent Change ('82-'87)	+ 2%	- 15%	- 19%	+ 6%	- 9%



Given recent enrollment/housing trends and the present Student Assignment Process, the next five years should "see"

- a levelling off (or slight rise) in elementary level enrollments
- the "end" of middle school enrollment decline
- dramatic enrollment decline in high schools, with a levelling off not likely much before 1990.

It is very important that the above data be read before one considers the Burke/Dorchester matter. I see impending enrollment decline at the secondary level to be both a challenge and an opportunity for systemwide educational renewal; the enrollment decline -- to me -- suggests a need for realignments of secondary schools rather than the mere closing of some facilities.

## 2. Enrollment History of Burke/Dorchester High Schools

Although high school enrollments have not declined as greatly as other enrollments in the last five years, the Burke and Dorchester enrollments have dropped significantly. That problem is caused by two factors:

- schools in District V have experienced a 30% enrollment decline, greater than in any other of the nine enrollment districts
- public school enrollment (exclusive of District of Assignment) has declined by 22% in District V, second only to District III and VI of the eight geographic districts.

Burke and Dorchester High Schools, therefore, are affected adversely by both demographic change in Dorchester and the enormous variety of options available to high school students. Despite the widespread view regarding the rigidity of the Student Assignment Process, the average high school student in regular education can apply for one of three Examination Schools and, if unsuccessful, can then apply for one of five citywide high schools or for one of seven cooperative programs or for the community district high school.

It is my opinion that students/parents living in District V have taken full advantage of that variety of options -- to the disadvantage of Burke/Dorchester.

There follows the recent enrollment history of the Burke/Dorchester High Schools:

	<u>Burke</u>	<u>Dorchester</u>	<u>District V (K-13)</u>
12/77	899	1053	11631
12/78	873	962	10935
12/79	767	957	10379
12/80	795	987	9867
12/81	698	972	8808
12/82	625	877	8155
12/83	554	852	7848
(Projected)			



3. Enrollments for Burke/Dorchester High School - 1983-84

The initial 1983-84 assignments for the two high schools, issued in May 1983, were very low and extremely so at grade nine. As I opined in June, there has been improvement over the summer, although some of that "improvement" depends on the results of summer school for some high school students.

	<u>Burke</u>		<u>Dorchester</u>	
	<u>5/17/83 for '83-84</u>	<u>8/11/83 for '83-'84</u>	<u>5/17/83 for '83-'84</u>	<u>8/11/83 for '83-'84</u>
gr. 9	88	159	161	217
gr. 10	194	179	229	237
gr. 11	129	144	226	214
gr. 12	99	94	152	133
TOTAL	510	576	768	801

I do not wish to mislead you. Some of the above increase may disappear when the summer school results occur. I am still inclined to believe that our enrollment projections for 1983-84 at the two schools -- 554 for Burke and 852 for Dorchester -- are the likely enrollments for December 1983.

4. The Student Assignment Process for 1983-84

No Black and only two Other Minority students who last Spring asked to attend Burke or Dorchester High School for 1983-84 were refused. Numerous white students who did not ask to attend Burke or Dorchester High School were assigned to one of the District V high schools.

Some Black or Other Minority students, then in grade eight, who did not return applications last Spring were assigned to Madison Park High School or English High School. In June their names were given to the Burke and Dorchester Headmasters for recruitment. I offered to transfer any such student to Burke or Dorchester if he or his parent were willing. Thus far -- understandably, due to the summer hiatus -- the recruitment results have not been great. However, many of those students who wish to transfer to Burke or Dorchester before October 1, 1983 will be obliged.

An analysis was done of Black and Other Minority regular education eighth graders, in District V, who were applying for high school. This analysis excluded Bilingual Education, Special Needs and Examination Schools students.

	<u>From Cleveland</u>	<u>From Holmes</u>	<u>From Wilson</u>	<u>From Other Schools</u>	<u>Total</u>
Rcvd. 1st Choice	111	37	114	70	332
Rcvd. 2nd Choice	4	4	8	6	22
Rcvd. 3rd Choice	1	2	5	1	9
Rcvd. No Choice	3	0	2	10	15
Made No Choice	27	7	18	10	62
TOTAL	146	50	147	97	440

Please note:

- No Black student in the above group who asked for Burke or Dorchester as a first choice was refused





- Two Other Minority students asked for Dorchester as a first choice but were given their second choices
- Approximately 40 students who expressed second or third preferences for Burke/Dorchester did not receive assignments to Burke/Dorchester, but did receive their first or second preferences for other schools and programs
- Madison Park High School was the first preference of 155 of the above students

5. What More Can Be Done?

On June 8th I provided Dorchester High with the names of 120 prospective ninth grade recruits who had not returned applications, or who had expressed 2nd or 3rd preferences for Dorchester, or who had expressed a preference for Madison Park and had received it. I provided a comparable list of 90 prospective recruits to Burke High. I will transfer any such students who volunteer before October 1st. The burden of recruitment rests on the two high schools.

Further, it has been standard procedure all summer -- and it will so continue through the year -- to assign all new high school students, regular education, to Burke/Dorchester if they reside in District V. (This admittedly will result in marginal increases.)

6. Conclusions

One could argue -- and, with hindsight, I might agree -- that we should have assigned to Dorchester/Burke about 30 to 50 Black or Other Minority students who did not return applications.

One could argue -- as I do -- that the majority of students/parents of all racial groups do not yet perceive Burke and Dorchester High Schools as preferable to other schools, e.g., Madison Park, Umana, English. This is not to denigrate the yeoman efforts at the two high schools in District V, but to suggest that community attitude changes slowly and that possible enrollment increase at the two schools will be made difficult by the citywide enrollment decline beginning to affect high schools.

The competition for high school students has only begun. English High School had 2311 students in December 1977 and will be hard-pressed to reach our projection of 1741 in December 1983. Madison Park High School had 2264 students in December 1977 and is projected to have 1935 students in December 1983. Officials at both schools probably will not complain about the currently diminished enrollments, but when those two schools each fall below 1500 students we may hear expressions of concern.



Addendum #1

Student Assignment Process

Grade 8 to Grade 9, District V Middle Schools

	<u>From Cleveland</u>	<u>From Holmes</u>	<u>From Wilson</u>	<u>Total</u>
To Exam Schools	37	12	20	69
To English	46	15	31	92
To Madison	60	25	55	140
To Boston	9	1	6	16
To Copley	13	5	12	30
To Umana	9	9	21	39
To Cooperatives	16	4	22	42
To Burke	36	0	7	43
To Dorchester	12	20	29	61
TOTAL	238	91	203	532

Notes:

1. The above tally does not include Bilingual Education students, Substantially Separate students and some students whose attendance was uncertain.
2. Except for the following, the above students received one of their three choices. The exceptions were:

	<u>NO APPLICATION</u>	<u>NOT REQUESTED</u>
Assigned to Dorchester/Burke	31	16
Assigned to English	12	0
Assigned to Madison	22	1
TOTAL	65	17



Addendum #2

High Schools - Enrollment Overview

	<u>December 1977</u>	<u>December 1982</u>	<u>Projected December 1983</u>
Brighton	1125	1120	1041
Jamaica Plain	877	929	890
West Roxbury	1408	1351	1317
Hyde Park	1068	1002	959
Burke	899	625	554
Dorchester	1053	877	852
South Boston	880	914	889
Charlestown	397*	985	918
Roxbury	477	-	-
East Boston	1089	1065	1044
Boston	662*	820	803
Latin Academy (9-12)	630	682	758
Latin School (9-12)	1329	1378	1360
Technical	1507	1104	1125
Copley	532	526	543
English	2311	1984	1741
Madison	2264	2126	1935
Umana (9-12)	507**	555	599
Trade	576	-	-
TOTAL	19591	18043	17328

\* Old School, smaller capacity

\*\* No grade 12 in December, 1977

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